

2012 marks an important election year in the United States. The Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) covers you while you reside overseas, and assists you in exercising your right to vote.

Voting from overseas requires some planning, however. This message contains important information on how to plan your election participation. *Many states have moved their primary elections to earlier than in previous election years, so please check now for your state's registration and absentee ballot request deadlines!* Links to your state or territory's voting website can be found here: <http://www.fvap.gov/>

Elections are managed individually by all 55 states and territories. This means that there are 55 sets of rules for absentee voting, but the basic steps are simple:

- Citizens register to vote and request an absentee ballot by filling out the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA), and mailing it to their local election official in the state or territory in which they are eligible to vote. This can now be done electronically for many states and territories.
- The election official approves/disapproves the FPCA or requests additional information.
- If the FPCA is approved, the election official sends an absentee ballot to the citizen.
- The citizen votes and returns their ballot to their election official by their state's deadline.

To successfully vote absentee, you should:

- Allow plenty of time to request, receive, and return your ballot.
- Notify your local election official each time your mailing address changes.
- Become familiar with your state's or territory's absentee voting laws, procedures, and deadlines to make sure your ballot is properly executed and will be counted.

We are ready to assist you in determining how procedures apply to you, so please feel free to contact us. You can find contact information for your closest embassy or consulate here: <http://germany.usembassy.gov/acs/>

A good source of general information for U.S. citizens is the U.S. Mission to Germany blog: <http://blogs.usembassy.gov/germany-forthepeople/>

If you would like to receive important announcements and messages sent to all registered Americans in our consular district, please sign up at <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui/>

You can also follow our blog, "For the People," at <http://germany.usembassy.gov/acs/blog>

Please note: Appointments are necessary for all consular services and can be made via our website at <http://germany.usembassy.gov/acs/berlinacs/>